

DNREC and Partners Earn Award for Living Shoreline Project

Delaware's Sassafras Landing living shoreline, a joint project of the [Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control](#) and the Delaware Center for the Inland Bays, has been recognized as one of the 2021 Best Restored Shores by the [American Shore & Beach Preservation Association](#) (ASBPA).

A method of shoreline stabilization and protection for wetlands, living shorelines absorb storm energy, build habitat and protect property while reducing the potential for shoreline erosion issues. They also filter pollutants to improve water quality.

ASBPA cited the project, located on DNREC's Assawoman Wildlife Area in Frankford, as one that successfully improved the area's resiliency to sea level rise by increasing protection to the "35-Acre Pond," an impoundment on the wildlife area, restoring surrounding salt marsh, and reducing nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus in the adjacent Miller Creek.

"We are pleased to receive this prestigious honor from the ASBPA," said DNREC Division of Watershed Stewardship Environmental Scientist Alison Rogerson. "We determined the best approach was to use the environmental-friendly living shoreline technique when we began the project in 2018. Working together with CIB, we created a living shoreline that has increased the pond's ability to adapt to rising sea levels, reduce pollution and create habitat."

The project was completed in June 2019, with help from two dozen volunteers who planted 5,200 plugs of native marsh grass. Since then, the marsh grass has thrived and successfully weathered several coastal storms. The plants have

thickened, wildlife have been spotted using the new habitat and the freshwater “35-Acre Pond” is protected from a breach by salt water.

“The living shoreline at Sassafra Landing will serve as one of the Center for the Inland Bays’ living shoreline demonstration sites,” said Chris Bason, CIB executive director. “These projects showcase a variety of living shoreline techniques, enhance wetland habitat, and provide opportunities to educate the public and marine contractors on the ecological benefits of using nature-based tactics to protect and restore eroding shorelines.”

DNREC collaborated with the Center and [Cardno civil engineering services](#) to design the project, and provided funds and materials including stone, rock, sand and plants, along with a construction crew from the DNREC Division of Fish and Wildlife. The DNREC Division of Watershed Stewardship also provided design assistance, surveying and signage for the project.

About DNREC

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control protects and manages the state’s natural resources, protects public health, provides outdoor recreational opportunities and educates Delawareans about the environment. For more information, visit the [website](#) and connect with @DelawareDNREC on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

About the Center for the Inland Bays

The Delaware Center for the Inland Bays is a nonprofit organization established in 1994, and is one of 28 National Estuary Programs. With its many partners, the Center works to preserve, protect and restore Delaware’s Inland Bays and their watershed. Learn more at inlandbays.org.

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